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By Craig Reber

Sixty-five years ago on Friday, March 26, 1945, one of the most savage and celebrated battles in Marine Corps history ended -- at a horrific cost of life. Iwo Jima was the only World War II Marine battle in which U.S. casualties (more than 24,000) exceeded enemy casualties (22,000 Japanese).

On Sunday, the Marines and U.S. Navy hospital corpsmen were remembered when the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously adopted House resolution 1099, which recognizes the 65th anniversary of the battle of Iwo Jima. Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Iowa, joined forces with Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., a 25-year Marine veteran, to introduce the resolution.

Braley's father, Byard, was an 18-year-old Marine who landed on the island on D+4, the same day as the famed flag raising on Mount Suribachi. Byard didn't know it at the time, but one of the first Marines to reach Mount Suribachi's summit was Cpl. Harold "Pie" Keller -- from Byard's hometown of Brooklyn, Iowa.

Adopting the resolution came amid the debate on the health care bill and the deciding House votes on the issue.

Braley said there were numerous tributes and stories shared by congressmen -- both

Republican and Democrat

-- regarding those who served. Braley told his father's story -- and that of Keller, who was the second Marine over the rim of the mountain and part of the group responsible for putting the first U.S. flag on the top of the extinct volcano during the battle for the island. Many were moved by the stories and told Braley afterward.

"It made it all worthwhile that I was doing something to honor the memory of my father," Braley said. "It was a very moving experience."

In the February issue of Leatherneck, the magazine of the Marines (circulation of about 100,000), Braley wrote about his father's legacy, the Iwo Jima battle and the need for America to recognize that the Department of Veterans Affairs is facing an increased and unprecedented demand for medical services today -- including treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. Braley was "very honored" that Leatherneck published the tribute.

As a 5-year-old, Braley received a Marx Toy set that depicted the battle -- including Mount Suribachi, Japanese soldiers and Marines. He still has it.

"If it was in mint condition, it would be worth a lot of money," Braley said. "It got a lot of use when I growing up. I'm happy to still have a memento of my early childhood."